&MILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND REFORMER 43

A little later, when Zola's young muse essayed her flight, he recalled those days of Provence, singing:

" O Provence, des pleurs s*6chappent de mes Quand vibre sur mon luth. ton nom m^lodieux... 0 region d'amour, de parfum, de lumi&re, II me serait Men doux de t'appeler ma mere... Autour d'Aix, la romaine, il n'est pas de ravines, Pas de rochers perdus au penchant des collines, Dans la val!6e en flenr pas de lointains senders, Oti, 1'on ne pnisse voir Fempreinte de mes pieds... ^Icolier e'cliapp6 de la docte prispn, Et jetant aux 6chos son rire et sa chanson, Adolescent r£veur poursxiivant sous tea saules La nymphe dont il croit voir blaachir les 6paules, Jusqu'anx derniers taillis j'ai couru tes for^ts, O Provence, & fonl6 tes lieux les plus secrets. Mes levres nommeraient chacnne de tes pierres, Ckacun de tes buissons perdus dans tes clairieres. J'ai jou6 si longtemps sur tes coteaux fleuris,

Que "brins d'herbe et graviers me sont de vieux

Those ramhles undoubtedly helped to rouse a poetry in Zola and Ms companions. Besides providing themselves with provisions, — at times a small ioint mutton and some salad plants, which they cooked or dressed in the wilds, — they carried books, volumes of poets, their pockets or their bags. One year, 1856, Victor Hugo reigned over them like an absolute monarch. conquered by the majesty of his compositions, enraptured by his powerful rhetoric. His dramas haunted them like splendid visions. After being chilled by the

classic monologues which they were compelled to learn by heart at the college, they felt warmed, transported into an orgy of quivering ecstacy, when they lodged passages of "Hernani" and "Buy Bias" in their minds. Many a time, on the river-

 $^{^{\}rm 1}$ Zola's " L'ASrienne " (1860) in Alexis, *I*, &, p. 265 et seq.